

How to Write an Effective Cover Letter



**TIP
SHEET**

While cover letters are not always required, writing one will make you a competitive candidate and help you stand out from other applicants. Your cover letter will share information about yourself and why your skills are a good fit. Below are some tips for writing an effective cover letter, as well as a sample.

TIPS FOR WRITING AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

- **Business Letter Format and Length:** Your cover letter should be no more than one page and ideally, 250 words. The letter will be single spaced with a space between each paragraph, which will not be indented. Address the hiring manager and if you don't know their name, write "Dear Hiring Manager:" or "To Whom It May Concern:"
- In the first paragraph, express your interest in the position. If someone referred you, note their name. Give a brief statement of your skills and strengths that make you a great candidate for the position.
- In the second paragraph, highlight specific experiences and skills from your resume that connect to what the employer is looking for in a candidate. Do research on the organization, such as visiting the website and reading the company's history and mission. Close-read the job description. Use language from the job post or the organization to show that you are knowledgeable, and that your skills connect well with the position.
- In your closing paragraph, express interest in an interview to discuss your skills and the position further. Thank the hiring manager for considering you as a candidate. You may close with "Sincerely," followed by your name, e-mail, and phone number.
- People who can support you with writing a resume can also help you write your cover letter (see "How to Write an Effective Resume" Tip Sheet).
- Aim for clarity and use key words from the job post or the organization to connect what you bring to the position. Don't use overly formal or complicated language. For example:
 - Advantageous → helpful
 - Leveraged → tried
 - Subsequently → after

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- Use transition words and phrases, like “In addition,” and “As a result,” to create clear connections between sentences and paragraphs.
- If you don’t have formal work experience yet, don’t worry! Focus on the positive & other experiences you can bring to a position.
- **Disclosing:** Remember, you are not obligated to disclose your disability in your application.
- **Sharing your cover letter:** Every job is different. Follow instructions on how to submit your cover letter. You may send your cover letter as the body of an email, as an attachment to an email (with your resume attached), or as an uploaded document on a website.